



Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP): Overcoming global energy challenges

Through the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, the United States and other major industrial nations are seeking the means to broaden worldwide energy choices ... by dramatically boosting the energy efficiency and environmental responsibility of nuclear power.

Idaho National Laboratory's Dr. David Hill says widespread concerns about unreliable foreign sources of fossil fuel and about global warming make advanced nuclear energy research like this essential.

"We believe that climate change is a real phenomenon and nuclear has to play a role in the future around the world. Many countries are investing in it now. But nuclear energy comes with problems, and that's how to handle the waste and the problem of proliferation. So, the U.S. is proposing something on a global scale that tries to address how to handle nuclear waste, how to deal with the proliferation issue, at the same time as delivering on the promise of nuclear energy."

To advance the overall effort, the U.S. Department of Energy is formally asking communities from coast to coast whether they'd be interested in hosting the research needed to define and demonstrate key technologies that could make this revolutionary nuclear energy approach a reality.

"The GNEP program as a whole will involve the construction of demonstration facilities to demonstrate some of the key technologies," said Hill. "The RFP process is part of the government's attempt to identify locations/regions which would want to host these facilities and be supportive. At the same time from a technical point of view we are trying to define exactly what those facilities would be. So the work we are doing augments the RFP process."

Communities across the region and nation have 90 days to decide whether they want to host demonstration facilities and to put their formal location proposals together. The Department of Energy will then consider the responses it receives, and decide on a short list of potential demonstration sites by sometime in 2008. More information on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership can be found on the Web at www.gnep.energy.gov.